The Maryland General Assembly’s 2009 Legislative Session ended in mid-April, with no merit-pay increases or cost-of-living adjustments for state employees, but no layoffs or additional furloughs, for now. We’re trimming costs in the library but haven’t taken a major hit yet. I guess we should consider ourselves lucky—I know some of you are facing much larger cuts. For my post-Sine Die holiday I took a quick trip to the Grand Canyon (it was grand!) by way of Las Vegas—a first visit to both—and I was amazed at the size of the casino resort hotels. I thought of the thousands of people who work in each of them, and the many people who have lost their jobs as businesses restrict travel and organizations cancel conventions.

Yes, I was amazed at the grand scope, glamour and entertainment; and I tried a little gambling, but I do feel especially fortunate to have a job at this time.

I’m looking forward to joining as many of you as possible in Philadelphia in July for the 2009 Legislative Summit. LRL is partnering with NALIT for some interesting programs and we’ll be visiting the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin! Thanks for the input from Evelyn Andrews and Susan Zavacky.

State budget constraints and restrictions on travel are going to prevent some of us from attending the Legislative Summit and the 2009 PDS in St. Paul. Those of you who can’t be there in person will have the opportunity to listen to, and/or watch, presentations and view handouts from links on the new NCSL website. The new NCSL website will also be a platform for increased e-learning opportunities. Thanks to Heather for all of her work on the LRL page!

My year as Chair has flown by and this is my last column. Thanks to Elizabeth Lincoln (who takes over at the 2009 Legislative Summit), Shelley Day and Cathy Martin, along with Heather and Jo, for making this year’s work so easy for me. Also at the Legislative Summit, new members will be elected to the Executive Committee of the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee. Please look at the details on the NCSL Webpage (http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=17474), and consider nominating yourself for a position on the Executive Committee.

See you in Philadelphia!

Jackie
This is a question that brings forth a chuckle or two for the staff at the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) Library in Hawaii. Not only do we need to explain where the State Capitol is located, we also have to explain that we are on the Chamber Level (basement) of the Capitol. In addition, we describe the location of the best elevator to use (Diamond Head corner), and that they will travel through three corridors in order to reach our library. As with all government buildings, the Capitol is a maze of offices. However, once found, the LRB Library can, and very often is, the proverbial mother lode of legislative information.

First of all, the State Capitol is a rather unique building and its design is full of symbolism and artistry. The legislative chambers are meant to resemble a volcano rising from the Pacific Ocean. The building itself is surrounded by a large pond. The columns are meant to be coconut trees, and also represent the eight major islands of Hawaii. It is an open air structure, and the rotunda is often the scene for large community gatherings—a political protest, a rally for the very successful University of Hawaii athletic teams, or a solemn occasion, such as the Celebration of Life service for the U.S. Representative from Hawaii, the late Patsy T. Mink.

The LRB Library is part of a consortium of government libraries in Hawaii—the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism Library; the Supreme Court Library and the Municipal Reference and Records Center. We share an online public access catalog called, "CARD" (http://hawaii.gov/lrb/card/). In one search query, a patron can search the catalogs of all four government libraries.

One of the most dreaded questions for any legislative librarian is, "Is there a law . . ." Sure, there could be. The next problem is how to describe it, i.e., DWI vs. DUI. Is it a federal, state, or county law? As with all legislative libraries, we have access to federal, state and county laws. We have the materials to provide a legislative history on state laws. And although space is limited, we maintain 10 years’ worth of bills.

The library is responsible for the Legislative Reference Bureau Web site (http://hawaii.gov/lrb/). It is a content-rich resource that provides links to studies and session action reports prepared by the Legislative Reference Bureau, as well as online resources, i.e., state Web sites, state and federal laws, judicial opinions from various state and federal courts, law reviews, and journals and publications.

We maintain a newspaper clipping file that originates from the 1970s. It never ceases to amaze us how useful it has been in providing a historical perspective to issues of the day, as well as to answer a patron’s questions. We also provide an Internet service called, “iClips – headlines to your desktop” (http://lrbhawaii.info/iclips/). It provides links to various news stories of local, national, and international interest. For those who have signed up for the service, a daily email notifies them when the iClips are ready. On the rare occasion when the iClips are not available in the early morning, we receive many calls and emails inquiring as to its status.

"First Reading" was the first blog produced by a legislative library and has proved to be very popular (http://1streading.blogspot.com/). As is stated in its title, First Reading provides information on trends, issues, and resources of interest to the Hawaii legislative community. The sources of information include publications available at our library, as well as links to those sources available online and elsewhere.

In an effort to make the resources of the LRB and the LRB Library more readily accessible to the legislators and their staff, the library developed an Intranet called, "lrb CapNet." From this site, one is able to view the “Legislator’s Guide to the LRB,” send a request for library search from their office desktop to the library’s printer, download session action reports from the LRB Systems Office, and preview digital copies of LRB reports.

For over 30 years, the LRB Library has published the “Guide to Government in Hawaii” and the “Directory of State, County and Federal Officials.” The Guide describes the state and county departments, as well as the federal agencies that have offices in Hawaii. The Directory provides contact information of the names of various individuals and agencies in state, county, and federal government. It is often referred to as the "telephone book." There is a high demand for both of these publications, and in the last few years, they have been available online. The entire Guide and Directory, or portions of them, are downloaded several thousand times a month. (See http://
By Kristin Ford, Idaho

In Idaho, we are not usually still in session by the time National Library Week rolls around. This year we held our second-longest session in history. By the time National Library Week came upon us, we were all of us, legislators, legislative and library staff alike, weary and grumpy. I considered skipping the usual celebrations I hold for legislative staff, with the excuse that we were too busy with session, but decided we needed the celebrations more than ever, and that it was a rare opportunity to involve legislators in National Library Week as well. Traditionally I have held daily contests and treats during National Library Week. This year, I delegated some of this responsibility to my assistant, Mark Robertson, and put him in charge of activities for two of the five days. Adding new blood to the celebrations turned out to be a good and successful infusion of energy.

Mark created a mini-golf course in the library... something I never would have done, but it brought in a different group of people that hadn’t traditionally participated in the usual library week quizzes and contests!

Celebrating National Library Week . . . During Session?!

Some legislators entered and even won in our contests, along with legislative staff, and many people thanked us for providing a little relief from the prolonged session this year!

Our activities included guessing how many “bookworms” were in the jar; library trivia quiz; mini-golf; dressing as your favorite librarian (winner poses with me); an essay contest describing a favorite memory of a library or librarian (we received some real gems! I highly recommend this activity.); and a fill-in-the-missing-word-from-the-statute challenge, where the fill-in words created their own sentence about libraries.

A couple of weeks after the end of National Library Week (perhaps emboldened by our NLW success), Mark and I decided to adopt and expand upon a tradition with the local media here. Traditionally, when the session nears its end, capitol reporters will start to sport “ugly ties” in an effort to encourage the legislators to finish their business quickly and go home. As we approached the record for the longest session this year, we in the library decided to sport some ugly sine die outfits, which caused much mirth in the hallways.

The Senate Majority Leader declared my outfit a misdemeanor! Was our clothing successful? Perhaps, they adjourned the following day!

Aloha!

2009 is the 50th anniversary of statehood for Hawaii. As with the state, the LRB Library is relatively young, but we will continue to change and grow with the times. Should you journey across the Pacific one day, please visit us at the Legislative Reference Bureau Library. And while in Hawaii, if someone says, “mauka” or “makai,” just know that north, south, east, and west are rarely used in giving directions. (Mauka means towards the mountain, and makai is towards the ocean.)

hawaii.gov/lrb/capitol/diguide/}

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Aloha!
State News

Colorado/Molly Otto
The legislature passed the "long bill" which approves the state budget for the next fiscal year, after intense debate. Most state employees will be taking furlough days, but I am not sure how the Legislative branch and Legislative Council will be impacted. The state agencies are implementing cost saving measures to trim their individual operating budgets. Several senior Legislative Staff members have recently retired, and their positions have not been filled, which yields cost savings for our budget. Some current Legislative Council staff have been reorganized and reassigned job responsibilities of these unfilled positions, to maintain office operations.

Three Colorado legislators are leaving the Legislature before their terms expire. One member is going to D.C. to work in the Obama administration; one member decided to return to the private sector; and the third member is moving to Australia.

Maryland/Jacqueline Curro
We welcomed David Engle to our cataloging staff this session. David is from New York and graduated from Simmons College. He worked at the Social Law Library in Boston (which we toured in 2007!) before coming to Maryland. He enjoys music and writing in his spare time.

North Dakota/Marilyn Johnson
What a session North Dakota’s 61st has been. With a projected budget surplus of over $1 billion dollars, legislators face competing demands to spend, cut taxes, and save. Then come the federal stimulus dollars.

Not to complicate things, the weather gave the state a one-two punch. With our record snow fall, the threat of flooding turned very real in March. In fact, the Legislative Assembly adjourned for several days to allow members and staff time to sandbag, protecting homes and businesses. Still the waters came, followed immediately by a blizzard that dumped historic amounts of snow in parts of the state. In early April, 52 of the state’s 53 counties were under flood watches or advisories. Secondary roads remain closed to this day. So, the number of dollars needed to cover the costs of fighting the statewide flooding and repairing infrastructure added to the legislators’ bag of remaining decisions.

As a biennial legislative body, legislators are only allowed 80 days every two years to complete state business. Over 200 conference committees remain as of April 16, the 66th legislative day. Evening and weekend sessions have become part of legislative life. This is not fun anymore.

As with all of you, the library staff—all two of us—whiz along providing information and data to legislators, staff, lobbyists, students, and the general public. Following session, we will have our legislative history records for the first time available online from the legislative branch Web site. We particularly appreciated Nevada’s records and format in that regard. The University of North Dakota law librarian and I will present a program on legislative history records to the members of the North Dakota Library Association this fall. We are looking at offering the presentation also to the State Bar Association of North Dakota when it meets in annual conference. Continuing library projects include a massive history of North Dakota state boards, commissions, and councils; subject indexing the Legislative Council’s biennial report and organizing the 2009 legislative history records for conversion to microfiche, disk, and posting them online.

On a personal note, my better half and I learned in March there is tongue and throat cancer in our midst. A week at Mayo Clinic revealed what Bismarck doctors could not find as Eldo’s cancer is a rather bizarre kind that grew from the inside out rather than the traditional other way around. Prognosis looks good but the initial chemotherapy has left Eldo with burning skin, swollen lips, and mouth sores. After nine weeks of chemo, he starts the really awful part—radiation. To his credit, he continues to work at his part-time job over at Motor Vehicle. He retired from the Department of Human Services 14 years ago. I am only leaving my office feet first because otherwise I have to face up to the piles of junk littering my home, including five cats. When our January temperature was -44 without the wind chill factor, I heard rapping at the back door. There stood a stray cat on his hind legs pounding to be let in. He ran inside, drank two bowls of water, ate two cans of cat food, wandered into the furnace room to sleep. He’s still there. The other rescue came in with no chin hair as she apparently tried to drink and froze her face to whatever. Does the fun ever end? I have to continue working to support five cats!

Ohio/Debbie Tavenner
Ohio’s two year budget is consuming legislative attention. It passed the House of Representatives and is now in the Senate Finance and Fi-
nancial Institutions Committee. The state in-
come tax collections came in well below esti-
mates making for difficult budget deliberations.

On the personal front, two healthy baby boys
were born to library staff members this winter.
Phinneas Pickett, son of Kelly, and Oliver Wiltz,
son of Steven, were born in January and Febru-
ary. Both "sleepy" parents are back at work!

Utah/Shelley Day
My Five Year Journey

For extensive renovation and construction rea-
sons, everyone vacated the State Capitol Build-
ing in April 2002, during which time legislators
and legislative staff were temporarily placed in
the newly-built House Building on Capitol Hill
for the next four years.

I packed almost 70 boxes of our library's gen-
eral collection (books and files) from the literal
thoroughfare, adjacent to the lunch room and
spanning a portion of two hallways in our Capi-
tol office. My partial cubicle had been open and
adjacent to the lunch room door for eleven
years, making for a less than an ideal working
condition. My father died on the very day we
had to have all our belongings labeled for the
movers. Instead of telling anyone about my
loss, I worked until I finished labeling and tap-
ing down the last of the box lids, left early,
then called in the next day to report to my su-
pervisor of my loss and that I would be gone
for a week.

When I returned to work, all those pretty
brown boxes were waiting to be unpacked,
shelved, and filed. So there I was on the top
level of the new House Building (1/4 of the en-
tire floor) with windows galore. The other '50
plus' office staff occupied 1/2 of the floor below
me. It made life easier for me during session
as the 65 university legislative interns shared
this spacious area, which included the adjoining
conference room that was transformed into an
intern room during session, with computers,
individual and group work areas, filing cabi-
nets, closets, telephones, printers, copiers, and
fax machines. I loved working with them so
closely, and it was an ideal situation to have all
the resources, including me, at their disposal.

At the end of four years, the State Capitol
Building reopened and many legislators moved
into their new personal offices and took the
House Building. I packed up the library again,
this time to be stored in the basement of the
State Capitol Building while I was placed in a
private office on the top floor of this marvelous
structure. Although I had a spectacular view of
the entire Salt Lake Valley for almost one year, I
spent a good portion of my time walking up and
down stairs to find valuable information care-
fully tucked away in catalogued boxes and files.
And I gained weight during this time! Go figure.

After five years of being "banished" from my
office, I moved back "home" where our office,
Legislative Research and General Counsel, now
occupies the entire second floor of the House
Building. My new private office (with a door)
and adjacent library room are very nice! And
thank goodness, the funding for construction,
new furniture, etc., was appropriated years be-
fore our nation's economic downturn. Our gen-
eral collection fills shelves and drawers, with at
least 10 years for growth, and is mostly organ-
ized now. The rest of our office library collection
is organized by topic area and resides in attor-
ney and analyst offices. As my fellow staffers
visit me in my office or walk by, they all com-
ment, "How nice it is to have the library's gen-
eral collection so close again!" And sometimes
they even tell me how nice it is to have me
amongst them once again! And that's the end of
my five year journey.

Wisconsin/Marian Rogers

The Library now has Wi-Fi access; a sign-on
password is available at the reference desk.

The Legislative Reference Bureau is tweeting on
Twitter: WILRB (http://twitter.com/WILRB).
News about the LRB, new library acquisitions,
and recently released LRB publications are fea-
tured. The tweet limit of 140 characters is chal-
ling!

The budget bill (A.B. 75) has been introduced,
public hearings are over, and floor debate will
begin soon.

Staff News: In January 2009, Library Services
Assistant Alan Marty retired after working at the
LRB for 30 years. We are happy to welcome
Richard Hsia, who previously served as Circula-
tion Assistant at our across-the-street library
neighbor, the Wisconsin State Law Library.

We are sorry to share the news that Rose Arnold
passed away on April 14 after an 18-month fight
against ovarian cancer. Rose retired in Septem-
ber 2007 after serving as Clippings Librarian for
30 years. She will be missed.
World Digital Library: Online and Open for Users

By Heather Morton, NCSL

In April 2009, the World Digital Library (www.wdl.org) was officially inaugurated at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, the U.N. Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Proposed in 2005 by U.S. Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, the idea was to promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding through an Internet-based, easily-accessible collection of the world’s cultural riches.

The principal objectives of the WDL are to:

- Promote international and intercultural understanding;
- Expand the volume and variety of cultural content on the Internet;
- Provide resources for educators, scholars, and general audiences;
- Build capacity in partner institutions to narrow the digital divide within and between countries.

The WDL focuses on significant primary materials, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other types of primary sources. The primary materials appear in their original language. The WDL translate the metadata that makes it possible to search and browse the site in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. UNESCO, the Library of Congress and 26 other libraries and institutions from 19 countries have contributed items to the project, such as a Japanese work considered to be the first novel in history, algebra works of ancient Arab scholars, rubbings of oracle bones from the National Library of China and a 13th-century "Devil’s Bible" from the National Library of Sweden.

The World Digital Library is a collaborative project of the U.S. Library of Congress, UNESCO, and partners such as Google, Microsoft, the Qatar Foundation, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Lawrence and Mary Anne Tucker Foundation and the Bridging Nations Foundation.

NCSL Publications

Reports:

- Encouraging Bicycling and Walking
- Direct-to-Consumer Marketing of Genetic Tests
- Access to Genetics Services
- Strengthening the Genetics Workforce
- Health Information Technology (Web only)
- Insurance Challenges for Paratransit (Web only)
- Adolescent Health: A Snapshot for State Legislatures
- Auto Theft Prevention
- State Economic Development: What Works?
- State Responses to Parole and Probation Violations
- Individual Development Accounts (Web only)
- Human Service Transportation Coordination and Legislative Oversight (Web only)
- High School Policy: 50-State Reports (limited printing for Education Summit)
- Rural Health Workforce
- Improving Child Health
- Minority Youth in the Juvenile Justice System
- Children of Incarcerated Parents (Web only)
- State Youth Legislation 2007 (Web only)
- State Youth Legislation 2006 (Web only)
- Beyond Highway Construction: Alternative Uses for Transportation Funding from America’s Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Web only)
- Guide to Leaders and Legislatures
- Promoting Healthy Communities and Reducing Childhood Obesity
- Transportation Annual Report—2008 Legislation
- 2008 Youth Legislative Action (Web only)
- State Budget Actions
- State Tax Actions
- 2008 Early Care and Education Legislation (Web only)
- Economic Funding Opportunities for Early Care and Education
LegisBriefs:

- The Crisis in State Unemployment Trust Funds - January 2009, Vol. 17, No. 1
- Preventable Injuries Burden State Budgets - January 2009, Vol. 17, No. 3
- Community Health Centers - January 2009, Vol. 17, No. 5
- Lowering the Minimum Legal Drinking Age - January 2009, Vol. 17, No. 6
- Disparities in Cardiovascular Health - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 7
- The National School Administration Manager Project - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 8
- The Costs of Climate Change - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 9
- Transportation Funding Outlook 2009 - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 10
- Physical Activity Guidelines - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 11
- State Approaches to Emergency Communications - February 2009, Vol. 17, No. 12
- Investing in Healthy Babies - March 2009, Vol. 17, No. 14
- Tracking Cancer Screening Progress - March 2009, Vol. 17, No. 17
- Maintenance of Effort and Higher Education Spending - March 2009, Vol. 17, No. 18
- States Act to Prevent Meningitis Deaths - April/May 2009, Vol. 17, No. 19
- High School Career and Technical Education - April/May 2009, Vol. 17, No. 20
- State Policies on Sex Education in Schools - April/May 2009, Vol. 17, No. 21
- Protecting Children Online - April/May 2009, Vol. 17, No. 22
- Felon Voting Rights - April/May 2009, Vol. 17, No. 23